(b) the steps taken to resolve the issues on wage revision; and

(c) whether the delay in resolving the wage revision demands has contributed to the falling maintenance practices in the carrier?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. Air India Aircraft Engineers Associations had demanded (i) revision of their wage structure, (ii) incentives on productivity, reliability, quality, assurance points, (iii) promotional opportunities, (iv) acquired qualification on Aircraft Maintenance work and its compensation, (v) domestic and international postings etc.

(b) Air India has already concluded wage agreements with certain categories of employees including Service Engineers. However, negotiations for wage revision are at advanced stage in respect of remaining categories of employees including the Aircraft Maintenance Engineers.

(c) No, Sir.

Ageing aircrafts in Air India

3508. SHRI SURENDRALATH: Will the Minister of CIVILAVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Air India has majority of ageing planes in its fleet causing frequent snags in the air;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of planes that have been grounded in the last three years;

(d) whether it is a fact that Government are contemplating to purchase new planes in its fleet; and

(e) if so, the number and make of the crafts and the time-frame of their procurement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVILAVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) There is no data available to establish that due to the aged fleet, the aircraft of Air India develop technical snags. Average age of Air India's fleet is 14.6 years. As the aircraft get older, some snags develop on the components and structural members of the

aircraft due to wear and tear and the cyclic load subjected on them. From time to time, the manufacturers prescribe maintenance requirements for each type of aircraft. DGCA ensures that the operators strictly follow manufacturers instructions for maintenance of their aircraft. Thus, every aircraft of Air India is maintained as per manufacturers instructions and is considered airworthy and safe for operations.

(c) During the period 1st April, 2004 to 25th April, 2007, Air India operated 1,01,319 flights of which there were 281 Aircraft on Ground (AOG). Out of these, 237 flights were grounded due to technical reasons.

(d) and (e) For modernization of its fleet and expansion of routes, Air India has signed a purchase agreement with Boeing Company for the purchase of 68 aircraft comprising 8XB777-200LR,. 15X B777-300ER and 27X B787-8 all powered with GE engines for Air India and 18 X B737-800W all powered with CFM engines for Air India Charters Limited (a subsidiary of Air India). The deliveries of 50 Aircraft to Air India Limited are scheduled between June, 2007 and October, 2011 and for 18 aircraft by Air India Charters Limited between December, 2006 and October, 2009. Air India Express has already taken the delivery of six aircraft on 30.11.2006, 28.12.2006,9.01.2007,16th January, 2007, 22nd January, 2007 and 14th February, 2007 respectively.

Congestion at the airports

3509. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that domestic airlines have increased manifold during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof, airlines-wise;

(c) whether it is also a fact that incidents of air-miss are increasing significantly on account of number of airlines and aircrafts increasing much faster than that of adequate equipment and staff; and

(d) if so, the steps Government have taken to cope with congestion caused by aircrafts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION